

A QUIRK of fixture planning brings together Wycombe Wanderers and Woking in a Rothmans Isthmian League Division One fixture at Loakes Park tonight (Tuesday), just four days before they are to meet on the same ground in the cut and thrust of an F.A. Cup tie.

But this does not worry Wycombe manager Brian Lee, who adopts the policy of taking each match as it comes. But tonight will give him the opportunity to watch his opponents before the all important cup tie.

Not that he should be too worried. Woking have had a strangely inconsistent season, and their cup run so far illustrates this point perfectly.

In their preliminary round encounter they gave a highly polished performance in beating Tonbridge of the Southern League. Then in the next round, they took three matches to defeat Farnborough Town, current leaders of the Spartan League.

Their side is largely unrecognisable from that which gained a shock 2-1 victory at Wycombe last season, as they have six new players. Full back Bobby Underwood and mid-field player Tony Roberts, both signed from Hayes have made a strong impression.

So to have Graham Cooper, from Walton, Vic Reynolds, a former Australian professional, and Dave Hutchins, George Palenski, who has worked his way up from the Reserves, is on the fringe of the side.

So far in the league, Woking have scored seven points from the same number of games. Victories have been gained against Corinthian Casuals, Clapton and Bishops Stortford, while they have lost to Tooting, Leatherhead and Oxford City. Their leading scorer is John Grondona, a former striker with Walton and Hersharn.

Their side for tonight's game will be chosen from: Collyer, Cheeseman, Underwood, Finn, Edwards, Cooper, Chapple, Reynolds, Oram, Grondona, Palenski, Hutchins and Roberts.

Wycombe, with John Maskell steadying up their defence, should win comfortably enough, providing they restrict the opposition like they did against a sub-standard Sutton side on Saturday.

BY GAINING the simplest of victories against Sutton United at Gander Green Lane, Wycombe Wanderers went right back to the top of the Rothmans Isthmian League Division One on Saturday. And the man, who contributed most to Blues' success, was tireless mid-field man Micky Holifield.

Wycombe have become something of a 'bogey' side to Sutton. For this was their

worst fears by adding the second two minutes from time.

Player manager Ted Powell, still remembered with affection at Loakes Park, certainly has some problems on his hands if Sutton are to achieve anything this season.

How he must have wished that just one or two of the Blues could have swapped sides on the day. He would have welcomed the creative ability of Pritchard in mid-field.

Upright, individuals such as Graham Dennis and Micky

If Blues were so much in control, why didn't they score a hat-trick of goals? The answer is that, sometimes eight man, defence and by sheer weight of numbers, Sutton's back-line kept them at bay.

Powell, although perhaps lacking a little of the pace he had during his prime, and worried by his side's lack-lustre display, was the homesters' most assured defender, while goalkeeper Alan Thomas brought off three first-class saves.

Williams from five yards. This he did almost nonchalantly.

Maskell twice did well to collect high crosses into the goalmouth, but one of his best saves came from Roger Grant's misdirected back-pass.

Most of the action, however, was at the other end. In the 24th minute Wycombe went desperately close to making it 2-0. Searle outpaced Alan Gillett on the left and sent over a high cross to the far post. Pritchard was there waiting, but his goalbound shot was deflected

been enjoying the best of games and Bodger's arrival seemed to lift his teammates.

Les Peck one of Sutton's better players took advantage of some laxity in the Wycombe defence six minutes from time, to break clear, but there again was Holifield, clearing this threatening move for a corner.

But from that dead ball situation, United came desperately near to scoring. Paul Webb's header from Dennis's kick hit the chest of Derek Gamblin, who was standing on

By MICHAEL KNOX: Sutton 0, Wycombe W. 2

seventh successive league victory over the Surrey club in the past four seasons. During that time, United have scored only two goals.

At the same time, leaders Hendon could only draw at home to much improved Walthamstow Avenue. So Wycombe, who set the pace in the opening weeks, are back where they belong.

That Holifield scored Wanderers' first goal is almost incidental to his great display. For as well as taking up fine positions up front, he worked like a terrier in mid-field, and at least twice prevented dangerous situations at the back.

The home side were disappointing to say the least. Long before the end, the fans were trickling out of the ground, although Wanderers were leading by only a single goal. Keith Searle confirmed their

Newman showed they had the skill. But they were unable to mould their flair into the teamwork, and some of their colleagues' passing would be frowned upon in Division Four of the Wycombe League.

Sutton's record of four wins from eight games was flattering, as they had previously played teams from the lower half of the league table. But Wycombe were another cup of tea. They gave a masterly performance, with the minimum of mistakes and were rarely in difficulty.

Although Holifield stole the limelight, credit must go to his teammates. Dave Bullock, both at the back and when joining the attack, gave a supremely confident display. Rob Williams picked up all the loose stuff in mid-field — there was plenty of that — and Keith Searle, with his close control and acceleration, caused numerous problems.

On winning the toss, Powell chose to play with the strong wind at his back, obviously hoping to steal the match in the first 20 minutes, and hold out for the remaining 70. However, it could be argued that, although the wind helped territorially, it made ball control more difficult.

It is unlikely that this decision had any possible bearing on the result. United produced their best football in the opening moments, and but for a stumble by Dennis when clear, they could well have taken an early lead.

But instead it was Wanderers, who went ahead after only nine minutes from their first concerted attack. Williams, with a piece of quick thinking, nodded the ball to Holifield, who was unmarked on the left of the area. All the diminutive mid-field player had to do was to control the ball and guide it past

onto a post by the alert Thomas.

Although Blues continued to dominate the play, they found it hard to break down the home defence, and the promising Steve Perrin and Holifield wasted sharp chances by shooting over.

One incident five minutes before the interval illustrated Holifield's determination. Newman broke clear following a Wycombe attack and looked set to test Maskell. But Holifield ran almost half the length of the field, and thwarted the move with a fine tackle.

The second half was a desperately scrappy affair, and Sutton were not the only ones to blame. For a while Blues were brought down to their opponents' level of misplaced passes and kicks into touch.

But the substitution of Tony Horseman for Dillon Evans in the 74th minute was a signal for improvement. Evans had not

the goal-line, and went for another corner.

Two minutes from time, however, Wycombe put the result beyond all doubt. Grant's corner kick went straight to the far post, where Searle rose unmarked to head just inside the upright.

Then in the last minute, Holifield, just to remind us that he had played his full part, produced a fierce accurate narrow angled shot which Thomas did well to palm into the side netting.

SUTTON UNITED. A. Thomas; A. Gillett; P. Webb, E. Powell, R. Bradford, L. Peck, P. Proctor, G. Dennis, M. Newman, D. Leonard, R. Kidd. Sub: J. Strong (not used).

WYCOMBE WANDERERS: J. Maskell; D. Gamblin, R. Grant, P. Wood, D. Bullock, R. Williams, D. Evans (sub: A. Horseman 74 mins.), L. Pritchard, K. Searle, M. Holifield, S. Perrin.

Half-time: 0-1. **Goalscorers:** Wycombe — Holifield (9 mins.), Searle (88).

Referee: D. F. Pond (Essex).